The Digital Invasion

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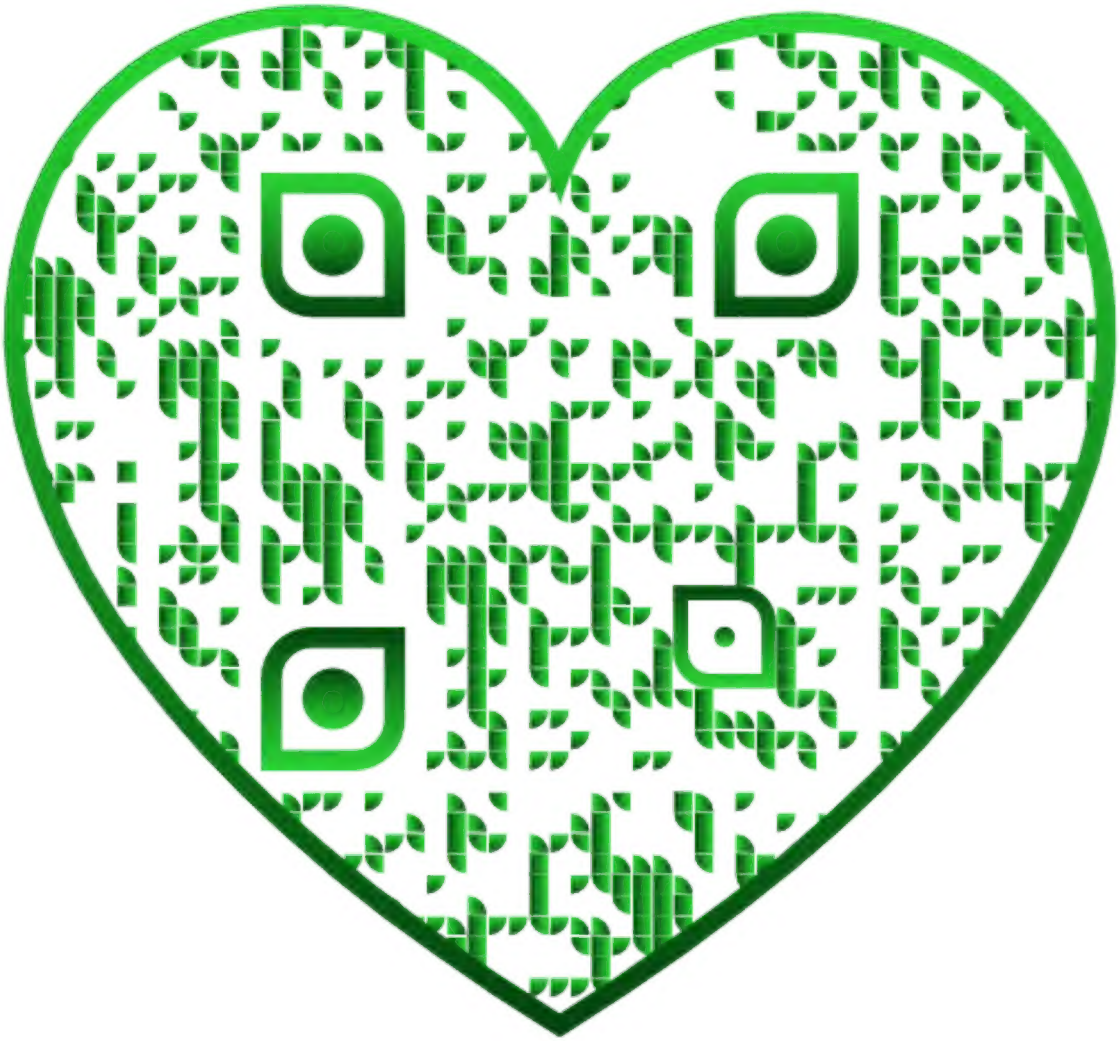

I. The dangers of technology

1. Inventions aren't always a good thing **(Ecc 7:29; Psa 106:29,39)**.
2. "If there is technological advance without social advance, there is, almost automatically, an increase in human misery, in impoverishment." (Michael Harrington, *The Other America*, 1962)
3. "Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end." (Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, "Economy," 1854)
4. "Technology and production can be great benefactors of man, but they are mindless instruments, and if undirected they careen along with a momentum of their own. In our country, they pulverize everything in their path -- the landscape, the natural environment, history and tradition, the amenities and civilities, the privacy and spaciousness of life, much beauty, and the fragile, slow-growing social structures that bind us together." (Charles A. Reich, *The Greening of America*, 1970)
5. "There is a demon in technology. It was put there by man and man will have to exorcise it before technological civilization can achieve the eighteenth-century ideal of humane civilized life." (Rene Dubos, *A God Within*, 1972)
6. "Why does this magnificent applied science which saves work and makes life easier bring us so little happiness? The simple answer runs: Because we have not yet learned to make sensible use of it." (Albert Einstein, 1931)

II. The dangers our minds face from digital technology

1. God has designed our brains to meditate, contemplate, and think deeply, especially on His word.
    A. The scriptures should be our *meditation* all the day **(Psa 1:1-2; Psa 119:97; Jos 1:8)**.
    B. Meditation *n.* - 1. The action, or an act, of meditating; continuous thought or musing upon one subject or series of subjects; serious and sustained reflection or mental contemplation.
    C. We should *meditate* in God's word **(Psa 119:15)**.
    D. Meditate *v.* - 1. *trans.* To muse over or reflect upon; to consider, study, ponder. b. To fix one's attention upon; to observe with interest or intentness.
    E. We should *muse* on God's works **(Psa 143:5)**.
    F. Muse *v.* - 1. a. To be absorbed in thought; to meditate continuously in silence; to ponder.
    G. A pastor is especially supposed to meditate upon the scriptures **(1Ti 4:15)**.
    H. Question: Do smartphones and tablets facilitate and encourage meditation and continuous thought or prohibit and hinder it?
2. In this digital age with all its distractions and sound-bite information, we are losing the ability to meditate and contemplate on God's word (and anything else for that matter).
3. The most frightening consideration is, that once lost, the brain may not be able to regain this ability.

4. The following are quotes from *The Digital Invasion* by Dr. Archibald D. Hart and Dr. Sylvia Hart Frejd:
    A. "For example, researchers are warning that the ability to "contemplate" or "meditate" declines in those who over-engage the digital world." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, *The Digital Invasion*, page 29)
    B. "...the *New York Times* reported that the chief technology officer of eBay now sends his children to a nine-classroom school where technology is totally omitted. [14] Yes, you read correctly, "technology is totally omitted." But that is not all. So do the employees of Silicon Valley giants like Google, Apple, Yahoo, and Hewlett-Packard. The schools they go to use teaching tools that are anything but high-tech. They use old-fashioned pens and paper and a blackboard with different-colored chalk. Remember these? There's not a computer to be found anywhere. They are not allowed in the classroom, and the school even frowns on their use at home." (Ibid, page 51)
    C. "Just think about the impact that "abbreviated texting," will have on future generations' ability to spell. It is possible that at some time in the future there will be no need for children even to learn spelling, since all gadgets will be voice activated and do the spelling for us. How users spell words will not matter at all. Computers will correct all our errors, just as, or better, than they do now as we write.
    But is this a healthy outcome? Many do not think so. It is more likely that the brain's basic structure and functioning could be modified to such an extent that it cannot revert to earlier functioning. In other words, once we have lost the art of spelling, we may never be able to retrieve it." (Ibid, page 60, underline mine - CEW)
    D. "Is it possible that the neglect of some brain mechanisms, due to our overdependence on digital technology, could change our brain to such and extent that it will never function again as it used to? According to scientists like Dr. Small, this could happen." (Ibid)

III. The need to rest the brain

1. Rest is very important to physical, mental, and spiritual health.
    A. A lack of rest can be due to factors outside the body, or inside the mind **(2Co 7:5)**.
    B. Our bodies need rest and sleep, which is a gift from God **(Psa 127:2)**.
        i. Sleep facilitates healing **(Joh 11:12)**.
        ii. Even Jesus needed sleep **(Mat 8:24-25)** and rest **(Joh 4:6)**.
    C. Our minds need leisure time.
        i. Jesus exhorted His disciples to get away from everyone and to take a rest from all the hustle and bustle **(Mar 6:31)**.
        ii. Mental rest is not found in the presence of other people.
    D. We need spiritual rest for our souls also.
        i. Jesus invites men to come unto Him, not the internet, for this rest **(Mat 11:28-30)**.
        ii. Our rest is found in believing in Christ and ceasing from our own works **(Heb 4:9-11)**.

2. In today's digital world, our bodies, and especially our brains, and not getting the rest and idle time they need.
3. This is having detrimental effects on us. The following are quotes from *The Digital Invasion*:
    A. "We are only really thinking when our brain is idle. It can't do much thinking when other demands take precedence. Unlike the idling engine of your automobile that is not achieving anything or going anywhere when the car is stopped, an idling brain is hard at work. A brain at rest is a thinking brain." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, *The Digital Invasion*, page 72)
    B. "If we allow the external world of digital technology to dominate our brain and not give it any "internal" time for itself, we will pay the price in reduced productivity and increased human misery." (Ibid)
    C. "To be healthy in mind and spirit in our digital go-go-go world, we need to find time for reflection and deliberation. We also need to give the brain adequate recovery time, meaning, of course, more sleep time. Otherwise, we can never truly think thoughts of our own. This is also true for our spiritual lives where contemplation, meditation, and other spiritual practices play a significant role." (Ibid)
    D. "If we do not build rest and relaxation into our lives, we will become less effective thinkers and increase our stress and anxiety over the issues that stole our relaxation in the first place. When your brain gets the rest it needs, you learn better and become more creative." (Ibid)

IV. Multitasking

1. A popular practice today in the business world and in our personal lives is multitasking, which has been greatly enhanced by the digital world.
2. God is not a multitasker, but a sequential-tasker.
    A. When God created the universe, He didn't leave off creating the sun and stars to start working on the fish, only to be interrupted by His land animal project.
    B. He did His projects in order, completing one before starting another **(Gen 1)**.
3. God does things with purpose.
    A. God saved us according to His purpose **(Eph 1:7-11; Rom 8:28; Rom 9:11; 2Ti 1:9)**.
    B. Purpose is the opposite of multitasking.
        i. Multi-tasking *n.* - The concurrent execution of a number of different tasks or jobs, as by interleaving or multiprocessing.
        ii. Purpose *v.* - II. To set before oneself for accomplishment. 3. a. *trans.* To place before oneself as a thing to be done or attained; to form a purpose of doing (something); to design or resolve upon the performance of.
        iii. Purpose *n.* - 1. a. That which one sets before oneself as a thing to be done or attained; the object which one has in view.
    C. Paul and his fellow ministers were not ones to be wavering in their purpose either **(2Co 1:17-20)**.
    D. We are to *press toward the mark* for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus which speaks of being *focused* **(Phi 3:14)**.
4. *Multitasking* is just another name for *distraction*.

A. God wants our undivided attention **(1Co 7:35)**.
B. So do our employers; they are not paying us to be distracted at work by spending time texting, emailing, and Facebooking.
C. Someone who is easily distracted has a weak or feeble mind.
D. Feeblemindedness is not a virtue **(1Th 5:14)**.
E. Have you ever heard foolish young people describe themselves as "random"?
F. Martha was cumbered about much serving and was not focused on Jesus **(Luk 10:40)**.
    i. Cumber v. - 1. trans. To overwhelm, overthrow, rout, destroy. b. pass. To be overwhelmed and held fast, as in a slough.
    ii. Martha was careful and troubled about many things **(Luk 10:41)**.
    iii. In other words, Martha was multitasking.
    iv. Mary on the other hand was intently listening to Jesus **(Luk 10:39)**.
    v. She focused on that one thing which was needful **(Luk 10:42)**.
    vi. Mary was not a multitasker.

5. Multitasking is thought to increase efficiency, but the opposite is the case. It actually lowers performance and intelligence.
    A. ""This steady and undissipated attention to one object, is a sure mark of superior genius; as hurry, bustle, and agitation, are the never-failing symptoms of a weak and frivolous mind." [1] Doing one thing at a time was, and still is, a mark of true intelligence." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, The Digital Invasion, page 74 (quoting Lord Chesterfield))
    B. "There is overwhelming evidence that multitasking lowers our level of performance. Studies at Harvard and Stanford Universities, using their brightest students, support this finding. Giving them sequential and multitasking projects, they found that ALL the students' performances were reduced about one-third when multitasking. [8] What is also notable about this study is that the students ALL reported at the end that they thought they were actually doing better when multitasking than when sequential tasking." (Ibid, page 81)
    C. "This same study, conducted by the Institute of Psychiatry in London, found that excessive use of technology also reduces workers' intelligence. Those distracted by incoming email and phone calls suffered a 10 percent decrease in their working IQ." (Ibid, page 82)
6. Multitasking also limits our ability to pay attention and learn.
    A. Learning requires meditation and study **(1Ti 4:15)**.
    B. Meditation is the opposite of multitasking.
        i. Multi-tasking - . n. The concurrent execution of a number of different tasks or jobs, as by interleaving or multiprocessing.
        ii. Meditation n. - 1. The action, or an act, of meditating; continuous thought or musing upon one subject or series of subjects; serious and sustained reflection or mental contemplation.
        iii. Meditate v. - 1. trans. To muse over or reflect upon; to consider, study, ponder. b. To fix one's attention upon; to observe with interest or intentness.
    C. A fool's eyes are in the ends of the earth **(Pro 17:24)**, but a wise man's eyes are in his head **(Ecc 2:14)**.
        i. A fool's mind is undisciplined, jumping from one thought to another.

ii. When talking to such an one (especially about doctrine), you must reign them in and make them focus on the topic at hand.
iii. This is something we all should train our own minds to do.

D. Consider again the words Dr. Hart and Dr. Frejd:
i. "Internet overuse is making our students shallow thinkers, as some experts allege.[12]" (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, *The Digital Invasion*, page 82)
ii. "Multitasking robs us of the ability to pay attention. As every parent and teacher knows, paying attention is essential to learning. People who have accomplished great things all have one essential characteristic: they have mastered the art of paying attention." (Ibid, page 85)
iii. "In other words, it is natural for the very young to be distractible. But as a child matures, he or she has to learn how to stay focused and pay attention, and this only happens through disciplined training, not multitasking." (Ibid)
iv. "We believe that all this wealth of information is creating a poverty of attention." (Ibid, page 86)

E. Is it any wonder that many children today are being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)?

F. Be sure to remove all distractions from your children when they are studying or being taught (TV, cell phones, iPods, iPads, etc.).

V. The need for human connection

1. This new digital world with its social networking, emails, and texts boasts itself a utopia for human connection.
A. We can now connect with long-lost relatives, friends, co-workers, and classmates from around the country or world.
B. People now have hundreds of "friends" on Facebook or LinkedIn.
C. But has all this digital connection actually improved our relationships and our fullness as individuals?
2. The scripture emphasizes the importance of face-to-face interaction.
A. When the apostle John could have continued his letter to the elect lady and written many more things which he had to say, he decided to wait and speak them face to face **(2Jo 1:12)**.
i. His reason for doing so? *That our joy may be full* **(2Jo 1:12)**.
ii. John likewise had many more things to say to Gaius, but rather waited in order to tell him face to face **(3Jo 1:13-14)**.
iii. Though far more personal than email, texts, or Facebook, even hand-written letters are no substitute for face-to-face communication.
B. Jesus' disciples had sorrow when they were told they would not see Him anymore **(Joh 16:17,22)**, but when they would see him again, their hearts would rejoice **(Joh 16:22)**.
C. While writing Timothy a letter, Paul told him that he greatly desired to *see him* **(2Ti 1:4)**. Why? - so that he might be *filled with joy*.
D. Paul, writing to the Romans, said he longed to *see them* **(Rom 1:11)**. Why? - so that he could be *comforted together* with them **(Rom 1:12)**.

E. Paul, Timothy, and Silvanus *greatly desired* to *see the faces* of the Thessalonians **(1Th 2:17)**.
   i. They likewise greatly desired to *see* them **(1Th 3:6)**.
   ii. Paul prayed night and day that he would *see their face* **(1Th 3:10)**.
   iii. Why not just write a letter?

F. The elders at Ephesus wept sore and sorrowed that they would *see his face* no more **(Act 20:37-38)**.

G. We all long to be with Jesus and *see His face* **(1Jo 3:2; Rev 22:3-4)**.

3. It's especially important for church members to see each other as often as possible.
   A. It was said of those in the OT who feared the LORD that they *spake often one to another* **(Mal 3:16)**.
   B. They didn't write, email, text, or Facebook each other often, but they *spake* often which in those days meant face-to-face communication.
   C. This is why it's important for all church members, both resident and non-resident, to be in attendance as often as they can.
   D. Christians are to be our companions **(Psa 119:63)**.
      i. Companion *n.* - 1. a. One who associates with or accompanies another; a mate; a fellow.
      ii. Associate *v.* - 1. *trans.* To join (persons, or one person with (to arch.) another), in (to obs.) common purpose, action, or condition; to link together, unite, combine, ally, confederate.
      iii. Accompany *v.* - 1. To accompany (a person or thing) to (another): to add as companion; to associate; to add or conjoin to.
      iv. When one is a companion with another they are joined together.
4. Consider the following observations from *The Digital Invasion* regarding the drawbacks and dangers of digital connections:
   A. "Digital contacts can never compensate for real face-to-face human contact with those you love. The concern is this detachment's impact on how parents attach to children and in turn affect the attachment style they will develop. We are designed for real-life attachments where we are seen, valued, and heard. It is in our closest relationships that we experience this. If our brain system becomes more attached to digital gadgets and detached from people, our relational skills will atrophy. We are already seeing evidence of this." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, *The Digital Invasion*, page 70)
   B. "Research shows that human connection is one of the keys to happiness. Connections are what make us human and are the core of how we express our humanity." (Ibid, page 92)
   C. "Unfortunately, the digital social media that now dominates our lives tends to foster more self-centeredness than deeper connections." (Ibid, page 93)
   D. "A good rule of thumb for yourself, and to teach to your children, is to use the digital world to relay necessary information, but communicate deeper thoughts and emotions in direct face-to-face encounters. This is essential in today's digital world for laying the foundation of healthy connections and relationships." (Ibid, pages 96-97)
   E. "Media has put us close to the people who are far away but has separated us from the ones who are nearby." (Ibid, page 162)

F. "As one expert puts it: "Tech savvy our children are; life savvy they are not."[7] Children who socialize mainly via social media do not grasp the finer points of social interaction; they need human contact, coaching, and modeling." (Ibid, page 174)
G. "Current research also reveals that digital natives who spend most of their time in a virtual world will more likely be lonely." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, The Digital Invasion, page 99)

5. Tips for overcoming loneliness and making real connections and friendships.
   A. If you want a friend, be friendly **(Pro 18:24)**.
   B. Frequent the same places at the same times. This will help you to see the same people regularly which will help to naturally establish connections.
   C. Visit other people who are lonely, like the elderly.
   D. Join a Meetup group and attend regularly.
   E. Try to at least say "hi" to people in your proximity.
   F. Look up. Stop looking at your phone in public. You might just be missing opportunities to have real conversations.

VI. The narcissism epidemic

1. Social networking breeds narcissism.
2. Narcissism - Self-love and admiration that find emotional satisfaction in self-contemplation
3. The following is a quote from The Digital Invasion regarding the link between social networking and narcissism:
   A. "This journalist's experience also highlights one of the major drawbacks of our overuse of social media, namely, that it fosters the growth of narcissism, which is now seen as epidemic in our young people....Narcissists are preoccupied with themselves and are obsessed with what others think of them. They also believe that they are entitled to the attention of everyone else....Narcissists are not particularly interested in, or good at offering, warmth and caring in their social interactions. They can enjoy being around people and can be most charming, flattering, and likable. But it is all for their own benefit." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, The Digital Invasion, page 93)
   B. One can easily see how Facebook is a narcissist's dream.
      i. They get to be a star, at least in their own eyes.
      ii. They post all the best pictures of themselves.
      iii. They post updates about their every move, as if people actually care what they are doing.
      iv. They get to promote a false image of themselves which is much more interesting than the real person.
   C. I have observed narcissistic tendencies in young children as well as adults.
   D. It doesn't help when parents are always telling their children how pretty, smart, or talented they are.
4. Narcissism is just a modern word for pride.
   A. Pride n. - The quality of being proud. I. 1. a. A high or overweening opinion of one's own qualities, attainments, or estate, which gives rise to a feeling and attitude of superiority over and contempt for others; inordinate self-esteem.

B. Proud adj. - I. 1. a. Having or cherishing a high or lofty opinion of oneself; valuing oneself highly on account of one's position, rank, attainments, possessions, etc.; Usually in a bad sense: Disposed to take an attitude of superiority to and contempt for others; arrogant, haughty, overweening, supercilious.

5. Pride is a sin.
   A. Pride was the first sin committed, even before Adam sinned **(1Ti 3:6 c/w Isa 14:12-14 c/w Eze 28:17)**.
   B. Pride is sin **(Mar 7:22; 2Ti 3:2; Rom 1:30; Eze 16:49)**.
   C. God hates pride **(Pro 8:13; Pro 16:5)**.
   D. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble **(Jam 4:6)**.
   E. Humble adj. - 1. Having a low estimate of one's importance, worthiness, or merits; marked by the absence of self-assertion or self-exaltation; lowly: the opposite of proud.
   F. Humility, not pride, is the key to success **(Jam 4:10; Pro 18:12; Pro 22:4)**.
      i. Humble v. - 1. trans. To render humble or meek in spirit; to cause to think more lowly of oneself.
      ii. Humility - 1. The quality of being humble or having a lowly opinion of oneself; meekness, lowliness, humbleness: the opposite of pride or haughtiness.
      iii. Even huge tech companies like Google recognize this.
      iv. World Net Daily interviewed Google Senior Vice President of Operations Laszlo Bock and found the following:
         a. "Bock cites a common error in "successful" people without intellectual humility: "They, instead, commit the fundamental attribution error, which is if something good happens, it's because I'm a genius. If something bad happens, it's because someone's an idiot or I didn't get the resources or the market moved. … What we've seen is that the people who are the most successful here, who we want to hire, will have a fierce position. They'll argue like hell. They'll be zealots about their point of view. But then you say, 'here's a new fact,' and they'll go, 'Oh, well, that changes things; you're right.'"" (Bob Unruh, Google: GPAs, Test Scores 'Worthless', World Net Daily, 2/24/2014)
         b. ""Without humility, you are unable to learn," he said." (Ibid)
6. What one talks about tells you much about him.
   A. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh **(Luk 6:45)**.
   B. Your heart is where your treasure is **(Mat 6:21)**.
   C. As he thinketh in his heart so is he **(Pro 23:7)**.
   D. If one is posting voluminously about himself on Facebook, including about how wonderful his family is, how great his job is, how nice of things he has, the great vacation he went on, and how interesting of a person he is; what does that tell you about what he thinks about the most? The answer?: himself.
   E. It's a fool who is only interested in himself **(Pro 18:2)**.
7. It is very easy to fall into pride.
   A. Even things that seem innocent might not be if they are done for the wrong reason.

B. This could be making posts about your kids, your job promotions, pictures of yourself, your house, car, etc.

8. The need for introspection.
   A. Before you post anything on Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, etc., ask yourself why you are posting it.
      i. If you are posting it to make yourself look good or to impress others, don't post it.
      ii. To search our own glory is not good **(Pro 25:27)**.
         a. "to set forth their own excellencies, to sound forth their own praises to seek honour of men, to use all methods to gain popular applause; this is not glorious and praiseworthy, but dishonourable." (John Gill, John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible)
         b. "...for men to search their own glory, to court applause and covet to make themselves popular, is not their glory, but their shame; every one will laugh at them for it; and the glory which is so courted is not glory when it is got, for it is really no true honour to a man." (Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible)
      iii. Remember to "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." **(Pro 27:2)**.
         a. What if others don't praise me? Then thank God.
         b. "We must also put away all notion of self-importance. God will not bless the man who thinks himself great. To glory even in the work of God the Holy Spirit in yourself, is to tread dangerously near to self-adulation. "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth," and be very glad when that other has sense enough to hold his tongue." (Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, p. 223-224)
      iv. Any wicked man can proclaim his own goodness and most wicked men do, but we should not be so **(Pro 20:6)**.
      v. He that is wise in his own conceit is a fool **(Pro 26:12)**.
   B. This goes not just for social networking sites, but for life in general.
      i. It's not he that commends himself which is approved, but he whom God commends **(2Co 10:18; Rom 2:29)**.
      ii. Nobody likes to hear someone else boast about themselves.
         a. Relaying facts about yourself is not necessarily boasting; it just depends on your motives for sharing the information.
         b. If you tell someone something about yourself, such as what your profession is, how much money you make (not wise), possessions you own or owned, places you've been, jobs you've had, accomplishments you or your kids have made, etc., just make sure that in your heart you are sharing the information for godly purposes such as edifying others or building a relationship by sharing personal information.
         c. Be careful to not allow pride to rear its ugly head and gloat about yourself by sharing information about yourself which "randomly came up" in the conversation; aka - you intentionally dropped hints or feelers to illicit questions which you are all too eager to answer.

VII. The tendency to say, share, and gossip too much online

1. Social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter provide an easy avenue to blab things we should not and would not normally have the opportunity to in real life.
    A. The definition of twitter is telling.
    B. Twitter v. - 1. intr. Of a bird: To utter a succession of light tremulous notes; to chirp continuously with a tremulous effect. b. transf. Of a person: To sing after the above manner; also (esp. of a woman), to talk or chatter rapidly in a small or tremulous voice.
    C. When things are written online they can't be taken back and can be saved forever.
    D. Be cautious about tweeting too much online.
2. As Christians, we should keep the door of our lips **(Psa 141:3; Psa 39:1)**.
    A. We should be slow to speak **(Jam 1:19)**.
    B. We should be slow to post and slow to tweet, too.
3. When you keep your tongue, you keep yourself from trouble **(Pro 21:23)**.
    A. Your mouth can cause your flesh to sin **(Ecc 5:6)**.
    B. The longer you keep yapping, the more likely it is for you to slip into sin **(Pro 10:19)**.
    C. It's the fool who says everything that's on his mind **(Pro 29:11)**.
        i. Ever hear anyone boasting about how he "told someone off"?
        ii. That's not a virtue, but a vice.
    D. A fool's lips will swallow up himself **(Ecc 10:11-13)**.
    E. An unbridled tongue (in person or online) makes a Christian's religion vain **(Jam 1:26)**.
    F. "We are masters of the unsaid words, but slaves of those we let slip out." - Winston Churchill
    G. "Be careful in speaking. There is always time to add a word, never to withdraw one." - Balthasar Gracián
    H. Think before you speak **(Pro 29:20)**.
    I. You have two ears and one mouth, use them proportionally.
    J. We will give an account to God for every idle word spoken **(Mat 12:36)**.
4. Wise men spare their words **(Pro 17:27-28; Job 13:5)**.
    A. “Wise men speak because they have something to say; fools because they have to say something.” - Plato
    B. "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt." - Abraham Lincoln
    C. "They never taste who always drink; They always talk who never think." - Matthew Prior
    D. "The problem with close-minded people, is that their mouth is always open." - Unknown
    E. "They that know the least know it the loudest." - Fred Hodgins
    F. A fool's voice is known by multitude of words **(Ecc 5:3)**.
    G. Always remember, you have the right (and often the duty) to remain silent.
    H. A fool is full of words **(Ecc 10:14)**.

I. "It is not a severe criticism to say that there are ministers whose words stand in a very large proportion to their thoughts." - Charles Spurgeon

5. Facebook and Twitter facilitate busybodyness.
   A. Paul instructed young widows to remarry, bear children, and guide the house, in part because of their propensity to be tattlers and busybodies **(1Ti 5:11-14)**.
   B. Facebook has now made it possible for young women, and too often young mothers at home with their children, to digitally wander about from house to house being busybodies and speaking things which they ought not.
   C. Being a busybody is no trivial matter **(1Pe 4:15)**.
   D. Much strife has come as a result of posting unnecessary things online.

VIII. The tendency to compare ourselves via social networking

1. Keeping up with the Jones' used to be restricted to your next-door neighbors.
   A. Now we have hundreds of virtual neighbors to try to keep up with.
   B. "Fear is very much part of the climate of Facebook. When we are afraid of what people think of us, we work hard to craft just the right image, composed of just the right pictures, personal information and status updates. The emphasis is on being clever, not on being genuine." (Jesse Rice, The Church of Facebook, page 197).
2. Comparing ourselves among ourselves is not wise **(2Co 10:12)**.
3. Paul, our example **(1Co 11:1)**, did not commend himself, nor did he need others to commend him **(2Co 3:1)**.
4. It's a very small thing to be judged of others **(1Co 4:3-4)**.
5. If you care about what people think of you, you have not yet grown up.
   A. It has been said that when you're 18, you care about what everybody thinks about you, when you're 40 you don't care about what anybody thinks of you, and when you're 60 you realize that nobody thinks about you.
   B. God thinks of you and that's all that matters **(Isa 49:16)**.
6. People tend to make their lives look like a fairy tale on Facebook.
   A. They appear to have the perfect life, the perfect marriage, perfect kids, perfect job, perfect social life, etc.
   B. When you compare your real life to their virtual life, you appear to fall short.
   C. They probably don't have it together like their Facebook page portrays, and you are trying in your heart to imitate a phony life.
   D. Even if they do have it together and have the "perfect" life, you should still not compare yourself with them.
   E. The only standard you should try to measure up to is God's standard found in the scripture.
   F. Don't be covetous of what others have; be content with what you have **(Heb 13:5)**.
   G. Don't worry about what God has given to others **(Joh 21:20-22)**.
7. Our completeness is in Christ and we should not seek it anywhere else **(Col 2:10)**.

IX. Cyber-stalking

1. Stalking has been made easier with the Internet with the anonymity it affords.
2. Here are a few practical tips to avoid being cyber-stalked.

A. Make sure that the location services are disabled for photos on your smartphone.
    i. If location services is enabled for photos, then each picture you take is digitally stamped with the GPS coordinates of where it was taken.
    ii. Someone with a simple Internet browser add-on can easily find the exact location of your home, school, vacation spot, etc.
B. Don't post your location and whereabouts on Facebook.
    i. Don't post where you are or where you will be for everyone to see.
    ii. Especially don't post when you are going to be on vacation so thieves know when to rob your home.
C. Teach your children to NEVER meet someone in person who they have only met online.
    i. I know a person whose daughter was raped by some goons she met on Facebook or MySpace.
    ii. Know who your children are conversing with online because there are sexual predators out there masquerading as peers of your children.
D. If your children are being cyber-stalked or cyber-bullied, then get them off the internet or the specific parts of it in which the stalking is taking place.

X. Internet gambling

1. Dr. Hart in The Digital Invasion had this to say about internet gambling and gambling addictions in general:
    A. "Estimates of the number of people who are diagnosed with a gambling addiction are difficult to find. It appears to range anywhere from 2 to 5 percent of the population in the United States. This may seem like a low percentage, but in real numbers it means that many millions of people are affected by it in the United States alone." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, The Digital Invasion, page 123)
    B. "Unfortunately this disorder does not respond well to treatment, and as many as two-thirds of those who begin treatment for a gambling disorder discontinue their treatment prematurely. It makes no difference whether treatment includes medication, psychotherapy, or both. It is a difficult habit to give up." (Ibid)
2. Gambling in itself may not be a sin, but to be addicted to it is.
    A. Addiction n. - 1. Rom. Law. A formal giving over or delivery by sentence of court. Hence, A surrender, or dedication, of any one to a master. 2. a. The state of being (self-)addicted or given to a habit or pursuit; devotion. b. The, or a, state of being addicted to a drug (see addicted ppl. a. 3b); a compulsion and need to continue taking a drug as a result of taking it in the past.
    B. To be addicted to anything is to allow it to have power over you.
    C. The Bible teaches that we are not to be brought under the power of anything **(1Co 6:12)**.
    D. We must keep our body, including our brain, which is prone to get addicted to dopamine, in subjection, not let it control us **(1Co 9:27)**.
    E. Sin must not be allowed to reign (to have power, sway, or predominance; to prevail or be prevalent) in our bodies **(Rom 6:12)**.
    F. We must not yield (to hand over, give up, relinquish possession of, surrender, resign) our body to sin and let it have dominion (the power or right of governing

and controlling; sovereign authority; lordship, sovereignty; rule, sway; control, influence) over us **(Rom 6:13-14)**.

3. Even if the act of gambling is not sinful, it is not wise.
   A. Lawful things are not always expedient **(1Co 10:23)**.
   B. The allure of gambling is getting something for nothing (or almost nothing).
      i. Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished **(Pro 13:11)**.
      ii. Even in the rare occurrence that someone hits the jackpot, it will not end well **(Pro 20:21)**.
      iii. The prosperity of fools destroys them **(Pro 1:32)**.
      iv. The Bible prescribes labor, not chance, for acquiring wealth **(Pro 14:23; Pro 10:4)**.
      v. Compulsive gamblers need to take a course in probability.
   C. Gamblers are not in good company **(Mar 15:24; Joe 3:3)**.
4. If you are addicted to gambling (online or other), follow the steps outlined in Section XII,9 for dealing with a sinful addiction.
5. Addictions will be further discussed in the section on Internet Addiction (Section XV).
6. If necessary, seek professional help.

XI. Video games

1. Dr. Hart in The Digital Invasion had this to say about video game playing and addiction:
   A. "As we write this book, it is estimated that 95 to 97 percent of our youth are playing video games of one sort or another." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, The Digital Invasion, page 124)
   B. "Video game addiction, also known as video game overuse is the extreme use of video games to the extent that it interferes with daily life. Gaming addiction is a form of impulse control disorder. People with this impulse control disorder can't resist the urge to engage in behaviors that harm themselves or others and are disposed toward developing other addictions such as alcohol, drugs, eating disorders, and compulsive gambling. The impulse to play these games is overwhelming. Teens are the most vulnerable to gaming addictions, and their need to play can be obsessive to the extent it is harmful to themselves or to others." (Ibid)
   C. "What causes gaming addiction? Again, the pleasure and reward system of the brain plays a major role in delivering extreme euphoria while gaming. This also explains why it is so addicting. Gaming provides a make-believe world for the gamer, providing an escape from the real world. In the case of a gamer in China who committed suicide, the head of one software association was quoted saying: "In the hypothetical world created by such games, they become confident and gain satisfaction, which they cannot get in the real world."" (Ibid)
   D. "Kevin Roberts, a nationally recognized expert on video gaming addiction...offers the following risk ratings for major games. The risk goes from 1-10, 10 being the severest.

      ....

      - First Person Shooter Games:
        Counter-Strike, Halo, and Call of Duty - Addiction Risk 7
      - Real Time Strategy Games:

Command & Conquer, Age of Empires, Empire Earth - Addiction Risk 7
- The Narcotics of the Game World - MMORPGs (Massively Multiple Online Role-Playing):
RuneScape - Addiction Risk 7
World of Warcraft - Addiction Risk 10" (Ibid, page 126)

2. With the pervasiveness of video games, especially first person shooter and war games, is it any wonder why the government has no problem selling their immoral and illegal wars to the public?
   A. Is it any wonder that it is now far easier than in previous generations for a soldier to kill an enemy in battle since he has been doing it virtually since he was a child?
   B. The military uses video games to train soldiers.
   C. With each new war, it has been statistically shown that higher percentages of soldiers will actually kill an enemy soldier.
   D. Could this be the cause of a dramatic increase in PTSD and suicide among soldiers returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan?
   E. Could these type of video games illicit "wicked imaginations" which God hates? **(Pro 6:18)**
3. Video gaming might not be a sin, but is it wise?
4. At some point, too much video gaming crosses over into an addiction, which would be sinful (see Section XV,1), especially if the addiction causes one to neglect obligatory duties of life.
5. If you are addicted to video games, follow the steps outlined in Section XII,9 for dealing with a sinful addiction.
6. Addictions will be further discussed in the section on Internet Addictions (Section XV).

XII. Internet pornography

1. "The greatest threat to the body of Christ, to the church, to families, and to the individual Christian is the pervasive, destructive pornography available through the Internet." (Josh McDowell)
2. Internet pornography is an evil invention of men which people go a whoring after **(Psa 106:39)**.
3. Pornography used to be harder to get.
   A. It required going to a store and buying a magazine in person.
   B. This was a deterrent to decent people.
   C. Then it became available on the internet in the privacy of one's home.
   D. This made it easier to obtain, but it was still mildly risky because there was only a family computer in a common area of the house.
   E. Then laptops, smartphones, and tablets came out and porn became accessible anywhere, anytime in the privacy of your own bedroom, etc.
4. The addictiveness of pornography
   A. Internet porn is different than "traditional" porn.
      i. "Internet porn has several aspects that distinguish it from other pornography as well as other addictive substances. Unlike porn in other media, net porn doesn't come in physical formats that must be acquired (and concealed), carry a high cost of ownership, and offer little in the way of variety before

becoming "stale". Online porn is potentially endless, and often free – users are not limited to whichever magazines or DVDs they can afford. And unlike addictive drugs, for instance, most internet porn is fully legal to view. The barriers to accessing net porn anytime, anywhere, are largely nonexistent: it's always just a click away." (The Nofap Experiment: A Voyage Through Porn Addiction, Support, And Recovery, ProjectKnow.com)

ii. "The internet is ubiquitous, its contents on-demand, making it the perfect medium for the porn industry. It has also demolished any social barrier of having to purchase porn in-person from a shop or adult store – internet porn allows its viewers to remain safely anonymous (or as anonymous as anyone can be online) in the comfort of their own homes." (Ibid)

iii. "WebMD reports that an astounding 420 MILLION web pages contain pornographic material. ********.com, the second-largest porn site on the web, receives 100 million page views a day, and serves 4,000 VIDEOS a second during its peak hours. This one site receives an astounding 2% of the internet's total traffic." (Ibid)

B. The Coolidge Effect

i. "Male sexual response follows a well-established pattern known as the Coolidge effect. As demonstrated in rats and other animals, a male will enthusiastically have sex with a female he's been newly placed with – but before long, he'll become accustomed to her, and less interested in sex. However, if she's replaced with a new female, the process restarts, and the male will once again be just as enthusiastic about having sex with her as he had been with his previous mate." (Ibid)

ii. "This is a novelty-seeking behavior: a new female mate is largely more stimulating and exciting than mates that the male has been with before. The effect is so pronounced that, with new females, the post-sex refractory period of males is substantially reduced - allowing them to have more sex, more frequently. While this effect is most prominent in males, it's also been observed in females to a lesser extent." (Ibid)

iii. "The features of internet porn are perfectly poised to take advantage of the Coolidge effect. Were it not for this novelty-seeking effect, net porn viewers would settle on the first few scenes they enjoyed, and never seek out anything else. But this isn't the pattern that's observed, as indicated by the continuing boom in the online porn business. Porn viewers have the opportunity to browse through as much new porn - "new mates" - as they wish, for as long as they wish. This provides a constant source of novelty." (Ibid)

iv. "This pattern of response to porn has been scientifically proven. In one study, sexual response steadily decreased as men were shown the same adult film 18 times in a row, but their arousal once again peaked as they were shown a new film the 19th time around. (http://yourbrainonporn.com/doing-what-you-evolved-to-do) With the vast amount of porn online, and all of the different niches available, viewers will never run out of novel porn, and this state of heightened sexual response can be maintained indefinitely. This

phenomenon, where modern technologies take advantage of our evolutionary tendencies in an exaggerated way, is known as a supernormal stimulus, or "superstimulus". It is the kind of overwhelming stimulus that the human mind simply did not evolve to cope with – just as unnaturally sweet foods drive us to keep eating unhealthy amounts of them. (http://yourbrainonporn.com/garys-research-intense-sweetness-surpasses-cocaine)" (The Nofap Experiment: A Voyage Through Porn Addiction, Support, And Recovery, ProjectKnow.com)

v. The scripture affirms these scientific findings that the eyes of man are never satisfied **(Pro 27:20; Ecc 1:8; Eze 16:28)**.

vi. "The endless stimulus of porn has a real impact. Today, 42% of male college students report that they regularly visit porn sites, one in five feel controlled by their own sexual desires, and 12% of them spend 5 or more hours watching internet porn every week." (Ibid)

vii. "Like any addictive stimulus, continued use of net porn appears to induce a degree of tolerance and desensitization. This heightened state of arousal becomes normal - a new baseline. Acquiring the same "high" now requires more effort. This further perpetuates the cycle of seeking out new porn, and the addiction is real: using internet porn is the single strongest predictor of compulsive internet use. It's more addicting than any game or social website, striking right at the heart of one of our evolutionary imperatives." (Ibid)

viii. "The behavior of porn users precisely matches the predictions of the Coolidge effect. Against this desire for novelty, traditional monogamous relationships with a single partner often cannot compete. This normal stimulus, a single mate, is not enough for someone who's used to the constant novelty of online porn. Just as with the rats, porn users can experience delayed ejaculation, as well as a selective impotence – one that occurs while with their partner, even when this is not an issue for them when viewing porn. (http://yourbrainonporn.com/dr-oz-show-addresess-porn-induced-ed) Even their porn use may become less satisfying to them, no matter how frequently they use it, often leading to more fetishistic or deviant porn content. Their addiction leaves them unable to stop, and all of this can greatly compromise their relationships as well as their enjoyment of sex. (http://yourbrainonporn.com/doing-what-you-evolved-to-do)" (Ibid)

5. Pornography Statistics
   A. The following statistics were taken from: Pornography Statistics: Annual Report 2014, CovenantEyes.com:
   B. The porn industry
      i. The porn industry generates $13 billion each year in the US.
      ii. Internet porn alone is a $3 Billion per year business.
      iii. By 2015, mobile adult content and services are expected to reach $2.8 billion per year, mobile adult subscriptions will reach nearly $1 billion, and mobile adult video consumption on tablets will triple. We are already starting to see an increase in mobile adult content.

iv. 1 in 5 mobile searches are for pornography.
v. 24% of smartphone owners admit to having pornographic material on their mobile handset.

C. Porn in the church
i. 51% of pastors say Internet pornography is a possible temptation.
ii. 50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women say they are addicted to pornography.
iii. Regular church attendees are 26% less likely to look at porn, however, self-identified "fundamentalists" are 91% more likely to look at porn.

D. Porn stats for children
i. 9 out of 10 boys were exposed to pornography before the age of 18.
ii. The first exposure to pornography among men is 12 years old.
iii. 71% of teens hide online behavior from their parents.
iv. 28% of 16-17 year olds have been unintentionally exposed to porn online.
v. 20% of 16-year-olds have received a sext and 30% of 17-year-olds have received a sext.
vi. 6 out of 10 girls were exposed to pornography before the age of 18.
vii. 15% of boys and 9% of girls have seen child pornography.
viii. 32% of boys and 18% of girls have seen bestiality online.
ix. 39% of boys and 23% of girls have seen sexual bondage online.
x. 83% of boys and 57% of girls have seen group sex online.
xi. 69% of boys and 55% of girls have seen same-sex intercourse online.

E. Porn stats for young adults
i. Today, 68% of young adult men and 18% of women use porn at least once every week.
ii. Another 17% [of young men] and another 30% of women use porn 1-2 times per month.
iii. This means for 85% of young men and nearly half of young women, watching porn is at least a monthly activity.
iv. 51% of male and 32% of female students first viewed porn before their teenage years (12 and younger).
v. 67% of young men and 49% of young women say viewing porn is an acceptable way to express one's sexuality.
vi. Politically liberal people are 19% more likely to look at porn.
vii. 19% of 18-24 year-olds have sent a sext.
viii. Students who have had sexual intercourse are five times more likely than virgins to be involved in sexting.

F. Porn and your marriage
i. "I have also seen in my clinical experience that pornography damages the sexual performance of the viewers. Pornography viewers tend to have problems with premature ejaculation and erectile dysfunction. Having spent so much time in unnatural sexual experiences with paper, celluloid and cyberspace, they seem to find it difficult to have sex with a real human being. Pornography is raising their expectation and demand for types and amounts of sexual experiences; at the same time it is reducing their ability to experience sex." - Dr. MaryAnne Layden

ii. Happily married men are 61% less likely to look at porn.
iii. Those with teen children are 45% less likely to look at porn.
iv. 68% of divorce cases involved one party meeting a new lover over the Internet.
v. 56% of divorce cases involved one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites.
vi. Men are more than 543% more likely to look at porn than women.
vii. 70% of wives of sex addicts could be diagnosed with PTSD.
viii. Those who have ever engaged in paid sex are 270% more likely to look at porn.
ix. Those who have ever committed adultery are 218% more likely to look at porn.

G. Pornographic Web Pages By Country (*Pornography Statistics*, FamilySafeMedia.com)

i.	United States	244,661,900
ii.	Germany	10,030,200
iii.	United Kingdom	8,506,800
iv.	Australia	5,655,800
v.	Japan	2,700,800
vi.	The Netherlands	1,883,800
vii.	Russia	1,080,600
viii.	Poland	1,049,600
ix.	Spain	852,800

x. The US has 7.7 *times* as many porn pages as these other eight countries *combined* (244,661,900/31,760,400).
xi. Still think the US is a Christian nation?

6. Pornography addiction is not limited to men; women are increasingly falling into this sin.
   A. The following is from: (*How Many Women are Hooked on Porn? 10 Stats that May Shock You*, CovenantEyes.com):
   B. "Here's what the most recent surveys tell us…

1. According to a study published in the *Journal of Adolescent Research*, about half (49%) of young adult women agree that viewing pornography is an acceptable way of expressing one's sexuality.

2. According to a survey of more than 11,000 college-age women, more than half (52%) of young women today are exposed to sexually explicit material by the age of 14.

3. According to a study published in the *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, 62% of women have seen pornography by the age of 18.

4. Exposures to porn during childhood are not just brief glimpses. Some teen girls are viewing online pornography for a half-hour or more at a time, and 1 in 7 have done this on multiple occasions.

5. About 1 in 5 women (18%) use the Internet for sexual purposes habitually—every week.

"In a recent survey of women who are part of the Dirty Girls Ministries online community (an online support forum for women with sexual struggles)…

6. Of the women in the community, 87% say they feel or have felt "out of control" when it comes to the matter of masturbation; 70% say the same about sexual fantasies.

7. Of the women in the community, 45% said they started "habitually and compulsively" watching pornography or engaging in cybersex when they were 13-17 years old.

8. Of the women in the community, 27% say they feel or have felt "out of control" when it comes to sexually chatting online; 11% say the same thing about sexting.

9. Of the women currently 18-29 years old, 61% saw porn for the first time before they were 13 years old; 55% said their first exposure was Internet or computer-based.

10. When asked how well did their parents prepared them to for sexual temptations and how well they taught them about purpose of sex, on a scale of 1 to 7, 55% of the members of this community gave their parents a 1. Another third (32%) gave their parents a 2 or 3."

C. The scripture teaches that it's not only men who are enamored with sex and the sexual body parts of the opposite sex **(Eze 23:20-21)**.

7. Pornography is sin.
   A. Nakedness is to be covered.
      i. The priests in the OT were to wear linen britches which went down to the thighs to cover their nakedness **(Exo 28:42)**.
      ii. It is a shame for nakedness to be uncovered **(Isa 47:2-3; Rev 3:18)**.
   B. A person's nakedness is only for the eyes of their spouse.
      i. A wife's nakedness belongs to her husband **(Lev 18:8,16)**.
      ii. A husband or wife is a covering of the eyes of the other **(Gen 20:16)**.
      iii. A man should only be satisfied with his wife's body and no other **(Pro 5:15-20)**.
   C. Lusting after a woman in your heart is adultery if you are married **(Mat 5:28)**.
      i. Adultery starts with the eyes **(2Pe 2:14)**.
      ii. It is sin for a married man to even *think* upon another woman **(Job 31:1)**.
      iii. This would be a wicked imagination which God hates **(Pro 6:18)**.

iv. If your spouse finds you looking at pornography, he or she could put you away for adultery since your actions have revealed the adultery you have committed in your heart **(Mat 5:28)**.
v. If it is commonly known that a married church member is indulging in pornography, they will have to be excluded for adultery.
vi. What would be adultery in the heart for a married man would logically be fornication in the heart for an unmarried man lusting after an unmarried woman.

D. Pornography is lasciviousness which is sin **(Gal 5:19)**.
i. Lasciviousness n. - The quality of being lascivious.
ii. Lascivious adj. - 1. Inclined to lust, lewd, wanton. b. Inciting to lust or wantonness.
iii. If it is commonly known that a church member is indulging in pornography, they will have to be excluded for lasciviousness.

E. Pornography incites concupiscence **(Col 3:5; 1Th 4:5)**.
i. Concupiscence - 1. Eager or vehement desire; in Theol. use the coveting of 'carnal things', desire for the 'things of the world'. 2. esp. Libidinous desire, sexual appetite, lust.
ii. Libidinous adj. - 1. Of persons, their lives, actions, desires: Given to, full of, or characterized by lust or lewdness; lustful, lecherous, lewd.

F. Pornography makes provision to fulfill the lusts of the flesh **(Rom 13:14)**.

8. How to avoid the temptation to view pornography.
A. Keep your thought-life pure.
i. Think on godly things **(Phi 4:8)**.
ii. You are what you think about **(Pro 23:7)**.
iii. Commit your works unto the Lord and your thoughts will be established **(Pro 16:3)**.
a. "Action seems to follow feeling, but really action and feeling go together; by regulating the action, which is under the more direct control of the will, we can indirectly regulate the feeling, which is not." (Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People, page 70)
b. "Thus actions affect emotions. Voluntary behavioral alterations will lead to involuntary emotional changes. It is important to understand, therefore, that feelings flow from actions." (Jay Adams, Competent to Counsel, page 97)

B. Read the Bible daily and hide it in your heart **(Psa 119:9,11; Pro 7:1-3)**.
C. This will keep you from whorish women who will tempt you to lust after them with your eyes **(Pro 7:5; Pro 6:20-26)**.
D. Practice controlling your eyes and thoughts daily as you see attractive members of the opposite sex.
E. Avoid things and places which make provision to fulfill your lusts (alluring movies, magazines, TV shows, websites, bars or clubs, beaches, and swimming pools where women are especially immodestly dressed) **(Pro 4:14-15; Rom 13:14; 1Pe 2:11)**.
F. Flee fornication (physical or mental); don't try to fight it **(1Co 6:18; Gen 39:12)**.
G. Pray that God will help you keep your eyes **(Psa 119:37)**.

9. How to deal with and overcome the sin of pornography addiction.
    A. The following are steps that are essential for dealing with and overcoming any sin, but will be specifically applied to pornography.
    B. These things **will work** if you do them.
    C. Acknowledge that you have sinned by looking at pornography.
        i. Admit to God you have done it and don't make excuses for it.
        ii. Don't try blame-shifting, generalizing, minimizing, or euphemizing your sin.
        iii. This is what David did when he committed adultery with Bathsheba **(Psa 51:3)**.
        iv. Acknowledge v. - 1. To own the knowledge of; to confess; to recognize or admit as true.
        v. Don't try to hide it from God; admit it **(Psa 32:5)**.
    D. Declare your sin to God and be sorry for it.
        i. Don't use generalities with God, but get specific and declare exactly what you have done **(Psa 38:18)**.
            a. Declare v. - 1. trans. To make clear or plain (anything that is obscure or imperfectly understood); to clear up, explain, expound, interpret, elucidate.
            b. Don't just say, "Lord I've sinned."
            c. Make it clear and plain, "Lord I've looked at evil sexual images or videos and committed adultery or fornication in my heart by lusting after women."
        ii. Dwell for a while on the fact you have sinned against God and allow yourself to feel truly sorry and broken for it **(Psa 38:18)**.
            a. Sorry adj. - 1. Pained at heart; distressed, sad; full of grief or sorrow.
            b. Let yourself feel the pain and sorrow for what you have done.
        iii. Godly sorrow works repentance from sin that won't be gone back to **(2Co 7:10)**.
        iv. God has mercy on broken and contrite sinners **(Psa 34:18)**.
            a. Contrite adj. - 1. lit. Bruised, crushed; worn or broken by rubbing. 2. fig. Crushed or broken in spirit by a sense of sin, and so brought to complete penitence.
            b. Allow yourself to be completely broken before God for your sin and God will have mercy on you.
    E. Confess your sin to God and ask Him to forgive it and He has promised He will **(1Jo 1:9)**.
        i. Confess v. - 1. trans. To declare or disclose (something which one has kept or allowed to remain secret as being prejudicial or inconvenient to oneself); to acknowledge, own, or admit (a crime, charge, fault, weakness, or the like).
        ii. God WILL forgive you for your sin of looking at porn if you confess it; you just need to believe that He has done it after you have asked for forgiveness.
        iii. This was what David experienced **(Psa 32:5)**.
    F. Once you have confessed your sin and asked for forgiveness, you need to **forsake** it **(Pro 28:13)**.

i. Forsake v. - 3. To give up, renounce. a. To give up, part with, surrender (esp. something dear or valued). Passing into sense 4. b. To break off from, renounce (an employment, design, esp. an evil practice or sin; also, a belief, doctrine). 4. To abandon, leave entirely, withdraw from; esp. to withdraw one's presence and help or companionship from; to desert.
ii. You need to break off, abandon, leave entirely, withdraw from, and desert pornography.
iii. You must go cold-turkey, not just try to wean yourself off of it.
iv. It is not sufficient to confess your sins only; you must also forsake them.
v. You must give up on your sin of porn and renounce it.
vi. Renounce v. - I. 1. trans. To give up, to resign (gto another), to surrender; esp. to give up in a complete and formal manner.
vii. You must formally and completely give up on pornography before God.
viii. If you confess AND forsake this sin, you SHALL have mercy from God.

G. Once you have confessed and forsaken your sin, then you must tell God with firm resolve, "I will do it no more." **(Job 34:32)**.
i. If you leave the door open to doing it again and say to yourself, "I will try to stay away from this stuff", you will go back to it again.
ii. But if you declare to God "I WILL DO IT NO MORE", you are not leaving yourself the option to do it again.
iii. This is crossing the Rubicon -- there's no going back.
iv. The key is that you can't leave yourself an out.
v. Purpose before God like David did that you will not do this sin again **(Psa 17:3)**.
a. Purpose v. - II. To set before oneself for accomplishment. 3. a. trans. To place before oneself as a thing to be done or attained; to form a purpose of doing (something); to design or resolve upon the performance of.
b. You must resolve that you will not look at pornography again.
vi. Now, what if you declare to God that you will do it no more and then you fail and do it again?
a. Then you repeat the same steps again.
b. If you fail, rise up and try again, "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again..." **(Pro 24:16)**.
c. But don't go into this thinking that you will probably fail; go into it resolved by God's grace that you will not fail.

H. Once you've confessed and forsaken your sin and resolved to do it no more; next, don't make provision for yourself to fulfill your lust **(Rom 13:14)**.
i. Stay far away from websites that have porn or anything even close to it on them.
ii. Immediately destroy all pornographic magazines, pictures, videos, books, etc.
iii. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. 15) Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." **(Pro 4:14-15)**.
iv. You may even need to get off the internet entirely for a while if it is too big of a temptation for you.

v. Replace the sinful behavior with good behavior; it's not enough to just stop the sin, you must replace the sin with something good **(Eph 4:22-29)**.
vi. Spend time reading good books, cultivating real relationships, or doing an enjoyable hobby.

I. Remember that this temptation is common to man and that God will not allow you to be tempted above that which you are able to bear **(1Co 10:13)**.
i. It may seem like it is too much to bear and that you can't resist.
ii. Don't believe that! -- believe that God will not allow you to be tempted more than you are able and that He will make a way of escape for you to bear it.

J. Remember that you can't do this by your own strength, but by God's grace YOU CAN **(Phi 4:13)**.
i. Remember what God told Paul, that His grace is sufficient **(2Co 12:9)**.
ii. Remember that Jesus was tempted with everything that we are tempted with and He knows what it feels like **(Heb 4:15)**.
iii. It is for this reason that we can go boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy from Christ **(Heb 4:16)**.

K. If you follow these steps and do what these above cited verses say to do, you will be guaranteed by the authority of God Himself that you will be forgiven and that you will overcome this sin.
i. These things work.
ii. Don't be afraid to declare to God that you will look at pornography no more for fear that you won't keep your promise.
iii. Do it and trust God that He will give you the grace to overcome it and He will.
iv. If you do it and fail, just keep going back to God and repeating the process, but don't allow that to be an excuse for you to break your word to God.

XIII. Cyber-sex and cyber-affairs

1. This is another problem which the digital world facilitates.
2. It has never been easier for married people to have "affairs" (commit adultery) than it is today via the Internet.
   A. Scripture warns us to stay away from strange women and "come not nigh the door of her house" **(Pro 5:8)**.
   B. It is now much easier to digitally "come to the door of her house" without being seen.
3. Adultery can be committed via the Internet without physically committing the act.
   A. Jesus taught that adultery can be committed in one's heart by looking upon a woman to lust after her **(Mat 5:28; Pro 6:25)**.
   B. Job knew that the covenant that he made with his eyes forbade him to *think* upon another woman **(Job 31:1)**.
   C. *Eyes* can be full of adultery **(2Pe 2:14)**.
   D. The thought of foolishness is sin **(Pro 24:9)**.
4. If you are found out to have been having an online "affair", you will be excluded from the church for adultery **(1Co 6:9-10)**.
5. This kind of thing needs to be avoided at all costs **(Pro 4:14-15)**.

6. If you play with fire, you WILL get burned **(Pro 6:25-32)**.
7. Heed the warning **(Pro 7:24-27)**.

XIV. Sexting

1. Sexting is texting a naked, partially naked, or nearly naked picture of yourself to someone else.
2. Sexting an immodest picture to someone who isn't your spouse falls under the same scriptural censures as pornography (see Section XII,7).
3. This might qualify as the stupidest thing a person could ever do.
4. This is becoming popular among teenagers and young adults.
    A. "According to the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project, 4 percent of cell-phone-using teenagers aged twelve to seventeen say they have sent sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images or videos of themselves to someone else via text messaging. Fifteen percent say they have received such images of someone they know via a text message." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, The Digital Invasion, page 118)
    B. According to an Associated Press-MTV 2009 poll, about one quarter of teenagers and one third of young adults have been involved in sexting. (ALARMING? One In Four Teens Admit Sexting Nude Photos, Survey Finds ,www.huffingtonpost.com, 12/3/2009)
    C. A new study has shown that it's even worse now.
    D. "Researchers from Drexel University surveyed college students, asking them if they had ever sent or received "sexually explicit text messages or images" when they were under age 18. Fifty-four percent said yes—almost all of it in the context of a romantic relationship or as a means of flirting. "We were shocked by the prevalence and the frequency of sexting among minors," says David DeMatteo, an associate professor of psychology and law at Drexel and one of the study's authors. He notes that previous studies have indicated the pervasiveness of sexting was much lower—around 20%. DeMatteo believes that participants in the study may have been more honest because they were allowed to remain anonymous and were reporting on past behavior. What's more, while the authors defined sexting as sending or receiving "sexually explicit text messages with or without photographic images," they allowed participants to define what "sexually explicit" meant to them....Participants acknowledged sexting as young as 13, but the vast majority were 16 and 17 when they sexted." (Study Finds Most Teens Sext Before They're 18, www.time.com, 7/3/2014)
    E. This has led to teen suicide.
        i. A 13 year-old girl in Florida committed suicide in 2009 because of the harassment of schoolmates after she sexted a partially nude picture of herself to her boyfriend and the picture went viral. (How a cell phone picture led to girl's suicide, www.cnn.com, 10/7/2010)
        ii. An 18 year-old girl in Ohio committed suicide in 2008 for the same reason after she sexted a nude picture of herself to her boyfriend who sent it to several others after they broke up. (Jessica Logan Suicide: Parents Of Dead

Teen Sue School, Friends Over Sexting Harassment, www.huffingtonpost.com, 3/18/2010)

F. This has also led to juveniles being charged with child pornography, which has the potential to cause them to be registered as a sex offenders for life and spend years in prison.
G. Don't EVER give nude pictures of yourself to anyone who is not your spouse.
    i. This means single people should NEVER do this.
    ii. This *especially* means that teenagers should NEVER do this.

5. This also frequently happens with adults, even married ones.
    A. There is nothing wrong with taking a nude picture or video of yourself for your spouse, but be very cautious doing it.
    B. Whatever you do, DO NOT TEXT IT OR EMAIL IT to them.
    C. Anything you text or email is not private and is archived and is viewable by your cell phone or email service provider and by the NSA.
    D. Hackers can also get them.
    E. If you are going to take (or have taken) nude pictures of yourself for your spouse, make sure you keep them digitally (and physically) secure.
        i. Make sure your computer is password protected (this will keep kids (maybe) out of it, but not hackers, etc.).
        ii. Make sure your WiFi router is password protected (strong password). It's also a good idea to not broadcast your SSID (network name).
        iii. Do not store them on your phone.
            a. A teacher at Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy resigned after a nude picture of her appeared on a revenge-porn site.
            b. She said her phone was stolen. (*Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy teacher resigns after nude photo spread online*, www.wcpo.com, 12/4/2013)
            c. It turns out she apparently lied and had sent the picture to someone other than her husband. (*Court hearing for teacher who resigned over nude photo continued*, www.journal-news.com, 3/4/2014)
            d. Be sure your sin will find you out **(Num 32:23)**.
        iv. Always have a password on your phone.
        v. If you are going to store the pictures or videos on your computer, make sure it's on an encrypted drive.
            a. You can find free encryption software online, such as TrueCrypt (http://www.truecrypt.org)
            b. It is a good idea to store anything on your computer which you want to remain private (banking information, passwords, etc.) on an encrypted drive.
        vi. If you ever sell or throw away your computer, remove the hard drive and physically destroy and obliterate it (smash it into pieces with a sledge hammer).
        vii. If you put the pictures or videos on a CD, DVD, thumbdrive, or print them, make sure you store them in a safe where they can't be easily acquired by children or others.
        viii. Be prudent and foresee the evil and hide yourselves **(Pro 27:12)**.

XV. Internet addictions

1. Internet use, like many other activities or substances, can be addictive if overused.
    A. If you can't stop doing a certain habitual thing (surfing the internet, video gaming, shopping, playing a sport, gambling, etc.) or using a certain substance (alcohol, cigarettes, coffee, pain medication, sleeping medication, etc.) without having withdrawal symptoms, you are addicted to that activity or substance.
        i. Addiction n. - 1. Rom. Law. A formal giving over or delivery by sentence of court. Hence, A surrender, or dedication, of any one to a master. 2. a. The state of being (self-)addicted or given to a habit or pursuit; devotion. b. The, or a, state of being addicted to a drug (see addicted ppl. a. 3b); a compulsion and need to continue taking a drug as a result of taking it in the past.
        ii. Addicted ppl. adj. - 3. a. Self-addicted (to a practice); given, devoted or inclined; attached, prone. b. Dependent on the continued taking of a drug as a result of taking it in the past; having a compulsion to take a drug, the stopping of which produces withdrawal symptoms.
    B. To be addicted to anything is to allow it to have power over you.
        i. The Bible teaches that we are not to be brought under the power of anything, even lawful things **(1Co 6:12)**.
        ii. We must keep under our body and bring it into subjection, including our brain which is prone to get addicted to dopamine, not let it control us **(1Co 9:27)**.
        iii. Keep - v. 56. keep under. trans. To hold in subjection or under control; to keep down.
        iv. Sin must not be allowed to reign (to have power, sway, or predominance; to prevail or be prevalent) in our bodies **(Rom 6:12)**.
        v. We must not yield (to hand over, give up, relinquish possession of, surrender, resign) our body to sin and let it have dominion (the power or right of governing and controlling; sovereign authority; lordship, sovereignty; rule, sway; control, influence) over us **(Rom 6:13-14)**.
    C. Addiction is a form of what the scripture calls inordinate affection **(Col 3:5)**.
        i. Inordinate adj. - 1. Not 'ordered'; devoid of order or regularity; deviating from right or rule; irregular, disorderly; not regulated, controlled, or restrained.
        ii. Affection n. - II. Of the mind. 2. a. An affecting or moving of the mind in any way; a mental state brought about by any influence; an emotion or feeling.
        iii. According to the definitions, an inordinate affection is a moving of the mind or a mental state brought about by an unregulated, uncontrolled, or unrestrained influence.
        iv. If a habit or a substance has an influence on your mind that you are not able to restrain or control (in other words, you have an addiction to it), you have an inordinate affection for that habit or substance.
        v. Inordinate affection is a sin which we are to mortify **(Col 3:5)**.
        vi. This means that we should mortify addictions in our lives.

D. For example: Christians must not be addicted to alcohol.
    i. A pastor must not be *given* to wine **(1Ti 3:3)**.
        a. Given ppl. adj. - 2. Used predicatively: Inclined, disposed, addicted, prone.
        b. Pastors cannot be addicted to any amount of wine.
        c. Therefore a pastor cannot even be addicted to one glass of wine or beer per day.
        d. Pastors are held to a higher standard than other Christians.
    ii. Deacons and aged women are not to be *given* to *much* wine **(1Ti 3:8; Tit 2:3)**.
        a. Non-pastors have a little leeway when it comes to wine drinking habits, as deacons and aged women are told to not be given to *much* wine.
        b. To have a habit of drinking several glasses of wine each day, which cannot be stopped without negative side effects, would be to be given (addicted) to much wine.
        c. A Christian is forbidden to have such an addiction.
    iii. This does *not* mean that pastors or church members cannot drink *any* wine **(1Ti 5:23)**.
    iv. Of course any addiction to wine could not extend to the point of drunkenness for any Christian **(Gal 5:21)**.
E. There are a few addictions the scripture allows and encourages.
    i. A pastor and church members must be *given* to hospitality **(1Ti 3:2; Rom 12:13)**.
    ii. The house of Stephanas was addicted to ministering to the saints **(1Co 16:15)**.
    iii. The churches of Macedonia *gave themselves* to the Lord and to the brethren **(2Co 8:5)**.
F. Unbiblical addictions, including internet addictions, should be resisted and fled from.

2. The following are some quotes from *The Digital Invasion* concerning Internet addiction:
    A. "The article goes on to say that the brains of Internet addicts scan a lot like the brains of drug and alcohol addicts. Our digital gadgets acts [sic] like electronic cocaine to the brain." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, *The Digital Invasion*, page 134)
    B. "A national study conducted by a team from Stanford University's School of Medicine estimates that nearly one in eight Americans suffer from at least one sign of problematic Internet use; many think it is higher than this." (Ibid, page 137)
    C. "Internet addictions share many of the characteristics of other addictions. These are the main features of all addictions:
        - Addictions remove us from our true feelings, providing a form of escape from the unpleasant aspects of life. In many cases, one uses the Internet excessively in order to cope with social situations that are out of control. For instance, a husband who is unhappy with his marriage could swamp his life with Internet activities. Similarly, someone who is not performing well at work could find an escape in the digital world.

- Addictive behavior takes control of the addict to the extent that it exceeds all logic or reason. The true addict has feelings but may not acknowledge them.
- Addictions take the pleasure system of the brain captive. Only the addiction provides pleasure, but robs the center of other pleasures.
- The addiction takes priority over all other life issues. All addicts develop an obsession over their addictive behavior and think only of the moment they can get back to their addiction.
- Addicts always deny that their addiction is out of control and cannot see anything bad in their behavior.
- All addictions are, in a sense, also substance addictions, when you consider that the body becomes "hooked" on the underlying biochemical changes." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, The Digital Invasion, pages 137-138)

D. "Research has shown the most effective treatment plan for overcoming digital addiction is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. [10] This treatment is based on the premise that thoughts determine feelings. This model helps explain how negative self-thoughts can fuel the compulsive behavior associated with the digital addiction. The most common negative emotions present in those with digital addictions are depression and anxiety. The other emotions digital addicts feel are being tense, lonely, restless, withdrawn, angry, or useless. [11] In treating digital addictions, the goal is to abstain from the application you are most addicted to while using the other needed digital applications moderately." (Ibid, page 144)

3. Addiction to the internet and digital technology is effecting troubled teens in worse ways than in years past.
   A. The following is a quote from Trace Embry, the founder and executive director of Shepherd's Hill Academy (SHA), a Christ-centered and biblically based residential program and school that serves families of troubled teenagers between the ages of twelve and seventeen.
   B. "I (Trace) have noticed an incredible difference in the behavior, attitude, and overall mental, emotional, and spiritual health of newly enrolled students over the past decade especially in the last few years. Being born into the digital world, this new generation of young people seems to be hardwired, like robots, with insatiable appetites for things that are killing them from the inside out.
   When kids come to our program for a year, SHA kids have virtually no access to television, iPods, cell phones, video games, movies, bombastic music, inappropriate entertainment, computers, or any other technological devices requiring screens, keyboards, or electricity. They are reduced to the basics of life. Over the years, we've discovered that when kids first come, their ability to reason, contemplate, and problem solve just isn't there, at least not as it should be for their age group. Many come with little ability to think abstractly or objectively. Most are very narcissistic and lack empathy, while some appear to have no conscience whatsoever. But again, over time their critical, creative, and constructive thinking capacities begin to return to them as they engage in activities, such as construction projects, preparing meals, and other problem-solving tasks that require those parts of the brain to fire again." (Ibid, page 181)
4. If you are struggling with Internet addiction (or any type of addiction) you should seek counsel from your pastor and possibly from professional addiction counselors as well.

5. Following the steps found in Section XII,9 of this outline on how to deal with sin in general is a good starting point.
6. If your children have an Internet addiction, you need to take as much as needed away from them to break the addiction.
    A. It will not make your children happy with you, but it is your job as a parent to stop their destructive behaviors.
    B. Start by being a good example for them yourself.

XVI. Suggestions for digital boundaries and etiquette

1. Set your email app on your smart phone to only retrieve emails manually, not by "push" or "fetch".
    A. This will stop the alert tones from distracting you while praying, reading your Bible, studying, working, or visiting with people.
    B. This has made a huge difference in my life.
    C. Limit checking emails to once or less an hour.
2. Configure your smartphone to automatically go into "do not disturb" or airplane mode during the time you are normally sleeping.
    A. This will block alerts for emails, texts, notifications from Facebook, Twitter, etc., and possibly calls from sounding and waking you up while you are sleeping.
    B. If you have a home phone and don't rely on your cell phone for your sole method of communication, then turn your off your cell phone or put it in airplane mode while you are sleeping.
3. Try to end your digital day by 9:00pm.
    A. Don't check email, Facebook, Twitter, etc. after that time.
    B. Don't read news, etc. on your smartphone right before going to bed.
    C. This will stimulate your brain and make it more difficult to fall asleep.
4. Don't take out your smartphone, tablet, or laptop when you are visiting with anyone.
    A. "In our fast-paced society with its multiple demands, there is a real danger that we are losing our manners, especially our social etiquette." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, The Digital Invasion, page 158)
    B. "The phenomenon has been coined absent presence, meaning that someone uses their phone to check their messages, play video games, or play with apps while they are with someone else. It is because of this out-of-control digital behavior that we would like to start our own "Netiquette Revolution." We are calling it "BE WHERE YOUR BUTT IS." (Ibid, page 159)
    C. "This revolution is about practicing the presence of people. When you find yourself in this situation, hit the pause on your smartphone or close your laptop, and reconnect with whoever is present. As an example, if you are having lunch with a friend or your spouse, try to stay focused, present, and in the moment with each person. Give them your full attention. Put your smartphone on vibrate and keep it in your purse or pocket. Resist the urge to check it. Better yet, leave it in your car. If you are checking out at Wal-Mart, engage the clerk that is ringing you up. Say, "Hello, how is your day going?" or "You are doing a great job!" Another idea is to make a "no heads down" rule in your home where there is no looking down at a computer or cell phone during a conversation. If the person does not take the time

to look you in the eye, stop the conversation until they do. Wouldn't it be amazing if we all would "be where our butt is"?" (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, The Digital Invasion, page 159-160)

D. Resist the urge to answer calls or read or respond to texts, emails, etc. when you are visiting with a real person.
E. The real person in front of you to whom you are talking should take priority over the cyber person in your smartphone.
F. Don't answer another incoming call when you are on the phone with someone else.
G. They can leave a message and wait for you to call them back.

5. Limit the amount of time your children spend on computers, tablets, smartphones, video-gaming, and watching TV.
   A. Setup controls in your router to block wicked websites (have someone help you if you don't know how to do it).
   B. Keep your router in a place that is physically inaccessible from your children.
   C. Consider turning it off at a designated time in the evening/night to shut down all internet in your home.
   D. Make sure that your children can't get on a neighbor's open WiFi network.
   E. Here are suggestions from the American Academy of Pediatrics on the amount of time children of different ages should spent on digital devices:

      "Recommended Screen Limits for Children

      Children ages 0 to 2 -- No screen time. Babies need all five senses to develop at this stage, and the digital screen only develops two of these senses, namely seeing and hearing.

      Children ages 3 to 5 -- One hour per day. This is the age of make-believe. They have no logic at this age so they need to spend playtime with other children.

      Children ages 6 to 12 -- No more than ninety minutes per day.

      Teenagers 13 to 19 -- Two hours a day." (Ibid, page 168-169)

   F. "Effective planning and boundary setting in today's digital world communicates caring. It says, "I cannot allow you to get into trouble. I love you too much for that. I want you to be the best person you can possibly be. So you have to trust me; my judgment is better than yours and my love for you demands that I say no when I must. Yes, you probably don't understand and almost certainly want to shout out 'you don't love me,' but one day you will be a parent yourself and will understand."

      "Children do not always see it this way. How can they? They are too immature to understand, but the day will come when they will appreciate it, especially when they become parents! So, say no appropriately, consistently, and lovingly, and your children will one day bless you for it....Deep down children do not want spineless parents." (Ibid, page 172)

G. "Try to monitor your child's texting without being too invasive in older teens. Talking regularly with your children and building a strong, open relationship is always the best protection." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, The Digital Invasion, page 174)
H. "The most effective protection a parent can offer a child is to be intimately involved in their lives, both inside and outside the home." (Ibid, page 180)
I. "My experience has convinced me that, deep inside, kids really want their parents to put limits, not just on their techno use, but many other areas of their lives also." (Ibid, page 182)

6. Have your children turn off their cell phones and give them to you before they go to bed.
   A. There is nobody that needs to get a hold of them when they are sleeping.
   B. This will remove the temptation to text, post, surf, etc. while they are supposed to be sleeping.
   C. This will also prohibit their friends who have no sense from waking them up in the middle of the night with texts, etc.
7. Consider taking a digital fast.
   A. Fasting is Biblical and we should be doing it from time to time **(M at 6:16-18)**.
   B. A digital fast where we keep all digital devices turned off for a day would do us all good.
   C. It will also indicate to you whether you are addicted to technology.
   D. "The fact is that anything we can't fast from owns us." (Ibid, page 161)
8. Be doers of the word, not simply hearers of it **(J am 1:22)**.
   A. Don't walk out here saying, "Yeah, pastor is right about this stuff" and then change nothing in your life.
   B. Make real changes where they need to be made.
   C. Don't tell me how much you appreciate this series (if you did); tell me what you have changed in your life as a result of it.

XVII. Our digital technology gets between us and God

1. "Some pastors excuse smartphones, believing that church members may be using a Bible app to follow the sermon. More likely, members, especially the younger members, are playing games or texting others." (Ibid, page 71)
   A. This pastor is not one of them.
   B. If there is one thing that digital technology should not replace, it's your Bible.
   C. Therefore, starting next Sunday, there will be no smartphones, tablets, etc. used during church for Bibles, outlines, or anything else in the Minneapolis Church.
   D. Phones, etc. need to be turned off or put in airplane mode and put away out of sight during church.
   E. Bring your paper Bible.
   F. If you want an outline to follow along with, then print the one that I email to you every Saturday.
   G. If you don't have a printer or cannot print the outline, let me know and I will print it for you.
   H. Phones will not be used in our church meeting room except when absolutely necessary for communication, or for sharing a picture, etc.

I. This means no texting, social networking, game playing, etc. (including children) while we are in the church meeting room.
J. This is our time with God and each other, and nothing or nobody else need intrude.
K. If you have any questions on this policy, just ask.

2. Protecting our "Godspace"
   A. God should be supreme in our lives.
   B. We are to love God with our entire being: our heart, soul, mind, and strength **(Mar 12:30)**.
   C. We are to keep ourselves from idols **(1Jo 5:21)**.
   D. Idol n. - 2. fig. Any thing or person that is the object of excessive or supreme devotion, or that usurps the place of God in human affection. [1557 N. T. (Genev.) 1 John v. 21 Babes kepe your selues from idoles.]
   E. Anything that takes the place of God in our lives that we devote the most of our time and energy to is an idol.
      i. This could be your wife, your husband, your children, your job, your hobby, your pleasure, or your possessions.
      ii. This could also be the Internet, your computer, your smartphone, your tablet, social networking, texting, etc.
   F. Our God is a jealous God **(Exo 34:14)**.
      i. God is jealous for our worship and our attention.
      ii. We need to jealously guard our "Godspace" and not let anything encroach on the time and devotion that God deserves in our lives.
   G. Consider the observations of Dr. Hart in The Digital Invasion:
      i. "It's almost as if the distractions that we allow the digital world to impose on us is a form of an idol that we worship instead of God." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, The Digital Invasion, page 187)
      ii. "If, as Keller suggests, an idol is anything that is so important to you that if you were to loose it, you would feel that life wasn't worth living, then could we become guilty of creating "counterfeit Gods"?" (Ibid)
      iii. "Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flicker, Pinterest, texting, or just plain emails are "time ravenous." While speaking with Christians, we keep hearing one consistent message: "I'm finding it more and more difficult to find time for God." Pastors and church members, male and female, young and old, are all being impacted, if you want a spiritual life, you will have to make space for it. It won't come naturally." (Ibid, page 188)
      iv. "The digital world has robbed our Godspace in another important way. It has made us informationally rich, but as a consequence, spiritually poor." (Ibid, page 189)
   H. Has all the information about God, scripture, theology, etc. on the Internet made us more knowledgeable about God than prior generations who did not have it?
   I. Have Bible apps on the phones and tablets of Christians which allow them to be able to read the Bible any time and any place made us better students of scripture than our spiritual forefathers were?

3. The dangers our digital technology poses to our ability to connect with God.
   A. Consider what Dr. Hart has to say about digital technology negatively affecting our ability to connect with God:

B. "Scientists tell us that they are already seeing a diminished ability to reflect, meditate, or contemplate in those who over-engage with the digital world. With these decreased abilities, our intellectual capacity is also on the decline. While this foretells serious consequences for how we learn or develop our creativity, our greatest peril is that we can also lose our ability to commune with God. If we can't disengage from our digital technology and keep a vital Godspace alive, we may not be able to engage with God at all. We will not have the physical brain mechanisms to make this connection. Moreover, just in case you think this a little far-fetched, it would only take a neurosurgeon a minute to cut a few connections in the brain, and our ability to experience God would be gone. In other words, we need a healthy brain in order to maintain a healthy connection with God.

"Dr. Gary Small, a neuroscientist and expert on Alzheimer's disease and aging, has spent a lot of time researching the effects of the digital world on our brain. He has this to report:

> Technology side effects appear to be suppressing prefrontal lobe executive skills in the brain. Today, video-game-brain, Internet addiction, and other technology side effects appear to be suppressing frontal lobe executive skills and our ability to communicate face-to-face.[5]

"Our conversations with others help us to have conversations with ourselves and in turn to have conversations with God. If you can't communicate in a healthy way with people, you will also struggle to connect with God and to have good self-awareness." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, *The Digital Invasion*, page 192-193)

C. "In essence, he states that when the prefrontal part of our brain, the part that does our main thinking, gets overloaded, it begins to shut itself down. Guess what is in our modern world that overloads the frontal part of the brain? Today's digital invasion targets mainly the frontal part of the brain, not only overusing it, but also depleting it of simple energy. This impairs our ability to think deeply, and consequently, communicate with God in a meaningful way." (Ibid, page 193)

D. "This now leads to the question, How can we protect our Godspace from the digital invasion? Christian psychiatrist Dr. Curt Thompson tackles this topic in his book *Anatomy of the Soul*. He proposes that the key to this protection lies in the realm of our spiritual practices, such as regular prayer, reading Scripture, and face-to-face connections with other people who can help us develop a vital and healthy relationship with God." (Ibid, page 193)

E. The importance of meditation in the scriptures was already covered in (Section II - The dangers our minds face from digital technology).

4. The need for silence.
   A. One important commodity in our lives which the digital invasion has robbed us of is silence.
   B. If we are going to experience God, it will only be by being still and silent.
      i. There is a time for silence **(Ecc 3:7; Hab 2:20)**.
      ii. If we are going to know God, we need to be still **(Psa 46:10)**.

iii. We must stand still in order to *consider* the wonderful works of God **(Job 37:14)**.
iv. Consider v. - 1. To view or contemplate attentively, to survey, examine, inspect, scrutinize. 3. *trans.* To contemplate mentally, fix the mind upon; to think over, meditate or reflect on, bestow attentive thought upon, give heed to, take note of.
v. We must stand still a while if we are to be shown the word of God **(1Sa 9:27)**.
vi. God can be near and we might not even know it **(Gen 28:16)**.
vii. Many times, the Lord speaks in *a still small voice* **(1Ki 19:11-12)** and we must get someplace alone to hear Him **(1Ki 19:13)**.

C. Dr. Hart had the following to say about the importance of incorporating silence into our lives if we are to maintain a sound mind:
i. "Silence is a "Sabbath of the mouth" and is about letting go of our inner distractions. It is probably the most challenging and least experienced spiritual discipline among Christians today. Technology is not only robbing our concentration but also our ability to just be alone and remain silent." (Dr. Archibald D. Hart, *The Digital Invasion*, page 195)
ii. "It seems like the more our senses become numb to the subtle ways in which God is speaking, the greater our hunger is for sensory overload. It is ironic that what our soul longs for is silence and solitude, but instead we fill our lives with noise and activity to pack the void." (Ibid)
iii. "Our brain desires and is wired for relaxation and rest from life's busyness. Amazingly, when we practice inner silence, it actually helps to restore important parts of the brain, especially the prefrontal cortex that is the thinking part of the brain, thus increasing our capacity to be creative and productive." (Ibid, page 196)
iv. "Studies have shown that the average person today, surrounded by the cyber world, can only bear about fifteen seconds of silence." (Ibid, page 197)

5. The need for solitude.
A. "Without solitude it is almost impossible to have a spiritual life." (Henri Nouwen)
B. It is very important to take time each day to be alone.
C. Jesus Himself needed time alone **(Mat 14:23; Luk 6:12)**.
D. Jesus exhorted His disciples to come *apart* into a desert place to get away from the crowd **(Mar 6:31)**.
E. If we are to have silence, we must first have solitude.
F. "Whereas *silence* is a "Sabbath of the mouth," *solitude* is a "Sabbath of involvement." Silence is about letting go of inner distractions and solitude is about letting go of your outer distractions." (Ibid, page 197)
G. "Distraction is the only thing that consoles us for our miseries, and yet it is itself the greatest of our miseries." (Blaise Pascal)

6. "Retire from the world each day to some private spot, even if it be only the bedroom... Stay in the secret place till the surrounding noises begin to fade out of your heart and a sense of God's presence envelops you. Deliberately tune out the unpleasant sounds and come out of your closet determined not to hear them. Listen for the inward Voice till you learn to recognize it. Stop trying to compete with others. Give yourself to God and then be

what and who you are without regard to what others think. Reduce your interests to a few. Don't try to know what will be of no service to you. Avoid the digest type of mind--short bits of unrelated facts, cute stories and bright sayings. Learn to pray inwardly every moment. After a while you can do this even while you work. Practice candor, childlike honesty, humility. Pray for a single eye. Read less, but read more of what is important to your inner life. Never let your mind remain scattered for very long. Call home your roving thoughts. Gaze on Christ with the eyes of your soul. Practice spiritual concentration." (A.W. Tozer)

XVIII. But can't digital technology be used to preach and further the gospel?

1. Digital technology can be used to further the gospel, just like the technological invention of the printing press was used to further the gospel by printing Bibles.
    A. We have a website for our church which truth seekers can use to find out about us.
    B. We digitally record sermons and Bible studies and put them on the Internet for people to download and listen to.
    C. I have a YouTube channel on which I post short video blogs to hopefully get God's seeking children exposed to the truth.
    D. E-Sword and other Bible study programs are wonderful tools to help us search the scriptures.
2. But never forget, though God *can* use technology to accomplish His purposes, He doesn't *need* technology to do so.
    A. The apostles turned the world upside down without even a printing press **(Act 17:6)**.
    B. They preached the gospel to all the world **(Col 1:6)** and to every creature under heaven **(Col 1:23)** without the Internet or modern transportation.
    C. The devil needs technology to accomplish his goal of world empire, but God does not **(Zec 4:6)**.